

Application Serial No.: 10/642,762
Reply to Office Action dated January 15, 2004, and
Supplemental to Preliminary Amendment filed on January 20, 2004
Satoshi MURAMATSU, et al.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A developer container configured to be removably mounted to a body of an image forming apparatus, said developer container comprising:

a toner portion adapted to store toner, said toner portion being made of a flexible film;

and

a mouth portion having a first wall connected to a toner outlet passage of said toner portion, said mouth portion having an outlet formed in a side wall thereof, said mouth portion having a valve for selectively opening and closing said outlet, said mouth portion having a second wall opposite to said first wall, wherein said second wall does not include an outlet for the toner.

10. (Previously Presented) The developer container as claimed in claim 9, wherein said outlet in said side wall of said mouth portion faces in a substantially horizontal direction when said developer container is mounted to the body.

11. (Previously Presented) The developer container as claimed in claim 10, wherein said outlet in said side wall of said mouth portion is configured to receive a nozzle that extends in a substantially horizontal direction when said developer container is mounted to the body.

12. (Currently Amended) The A developer container as claimed in claim 11
configured to be removably mounted to a body of an image forming apparatus, said

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developer container comprising:

a toner portion adapted to store toner; and
a mouth portion having a first wall connected to a toner outlet passage of said toner
portion, said mouth portion having an outlet formed in a side wall thereof, said mouth portion
having a valve for selectively opening and closing said outlet, said mouth portion having a
second wall opposite to said first wall, wherein said second wall does not include an outlet
for the toner,

wherein said valve includes a shutter comprising a seal member formed of foam sponge and closing said outlet, said seal member being formed with a slit via which the a nozzle is capable of penetrating into said developer container.

13. (Previously Presented) ~~The A developer container as claimed in claim 11~~
configured to be removably mounted to a body of an image forming apparatus, said
developer container comprising:

a toner portion adapted to store toner; and
a mouth portion having a first wall connected to a toner outlet passage of said toner
portion, said mouth portion having an outlet formed in a side wall thereof, said mouth portion
having a valve for selectively opening and closing said outlet, said mouth portion having a
second wall opposite to said first wall, wherein said second wall does not include an outlet
for the toner,

wherein said valve includes a shutter comprising:

a biasing member;

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a shutter member constantly biased by said biasing member from an inside toward an outside of said developer container and movable between a closing position for closing a passage and an opening position for opening said passage; and

a seal member disposed in said passage and slidable on said shutter member held in the closing position;

wherein when said developer container is mounted to the body, ~~the a nozzle~~ penetrates into said developer container in a substantially horizontal direction while moving said shutter member from the closing position to the opening position against an action of said biasing member.

14. (Previously Presented) The developer container as claimed in claim 9, wherein said outlet in said side wall of said mouth portion faces a direction substantially perpendicular to said second wall.

15. (Previously Presented) The developer container as claimed in claim 9, wherein said outlet in said side wall of said mouth portion faces a direction substantially perpendicular to said first wall.

16. (Previously Presented) The developer container as claimed in claim 9, wherein said second wall is flat.

17. (Currently Amended) The developer container as claimed in claim 9, wherein said valve shutter means comprises:

an external shutter positioned outside of said ~~developer~~ outlet and movable between a closing position for closing said ~~developer~~ outlet and an opening position for opening said

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~~developer~~ outlet; and

 a biasing member constantly biasing said external shutter toward the closing position;
 wherein when said developer container is mounted to the body, said external shutter is moved from the closing position to the opening position against an action of said biasing member.

18. (Previously Presented) The developer container as claimed in claim 9, wherein said developer container is mounted to or dismounted from the body in substantially a direction of gravity, said outlet being open in a substantially horizontal direction.

19. (Previously Presented) The developer container as claimed in claim 18, wherein a nozzle mounted on the body is inserted into or removed from said developer outlet in a substantially horizontal direction when said developer container is mounted to or dismounted from the body, respectively.

20. (Previously Presented) The developer container as claimed in claim 9, wherein said toner portion contains toner.

21. (Currently Amended) The developer container as claimed in claim 9, wherein said mouth portion is configured to receive a nozzle through said outlet in said side wall of said mouth portion whereby the nozzle does not extend into said toner portion.

22. (Previously Presented) An image forming apparatus comprising:
 a developer container removably mounted to said image forming apparatus and storing a toner;
 air feeding means for feeding air under pressure into said developer container; and

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a substantially hermetically sealed passage extending from said developer container to a position to which the toner should be replenished,

wherein said developer container comprises:

a toner portion adapted to store toner; and

a mouth portion having a first wall connected to a toner outlet passage of said toner portion, said mouth portion having an outlet formed in a side wall thereof, said mouth portion having a valve for selectively opening and closing said outlet, said mouth portion having a second wall opposite to said first wall, wherein said second wall does not include an outlet for the toner.

23. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus as claimed in claim 22, wherein said toner portion contains toner.

24. (Previously Presented) A developer container configured to be removably mounted to a body of an image forming apparatus, said developer container comprising:
means for storing toner; and
a mouth portion having a first wall connected to a toner outlet passage of said means for storing toner, said mouth portion having an outlet formed in a side wall thereof, said mouth portion having means for selectively opening and closing said outlet, said mouth portion having a second wall opposite to said first wall, wherein said second wall does not include an outlet for the toner.

25. (Previously Presented) The developer container as claimed in claim 24, wherein said outlet in said side wall of said mouth portion faces in a substantially horizontal direction

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when said developer container is mounted to the body.

26. (Previously Presented) The developer container as claimed in claim 25, wherein said outlet in said side wall of said mouth portion is configured to receive a nozzle that extends in a substantially horizontal direction when said developer container is mounted to the body.

27. (Previously Presented) The developer container as claimed in claim 26, wherein said means for selectively opening and closing said outlet includes a shutter comprising a seal member formed of foam sponge and closing said outlet, said seal member being formed with a slit via which the nozzle is capable of penetrating into said developer container.

28. (Previously Presented) The developer container as claimed in claim 26, wherein said means for selectively opening and closing said outlet includes a shutter comprising:

a biasing member;

a shutter member constantly biased by said biasing member from an inside toward an outside of said developer container and movable between a closing position for closing a passage and an opening position for opening said passage; and

a seal member disposed in said passage and slidable on said shutter member held in the closing position;

wherein when said developer container is mounted to the body, the nozzle penetrates into said developer container in a substantially horizontal direction while moving said shutter member from the closing position to the opening position against an action of said biasing member.

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29. (Previously Presented) The developer container as claimed in claim 24, wherein said outlet in said side wall of said mouth portion faces a direction substantially perpendicular to said second wall.

30. (Previously Presented) The developer container as claimed in claim 24, wherein said outlet in said side wall of said mouth portion faces a direction substantially perpendicular to said first wall.

31. (Previously Presented) The developer container as claimed in claim 24, wherein said second wall is flat.

32. (Currently Amended) The developer container as claimed in claim 24, wherein said means for selectively opening and closing said outlet ~~shutter~~ means comprises:

an external shutter positioned outside of said ~~developer~~ outlet and movable between a closing position for closing said ~~developer~~ outlet and an opening position for opening said ~~developer~~ outlet; and

a biasing member constantly biasing said external shutter toward the closing position; wherein when said developer container is mounted to the body, said external shutter is moved from the closing position to the opening position against an action of said biasing member.

33. (Previously Presented) The developer container as claimed in claim 24, wherein said developer container is mounted to or dismounted from the body in substantially a direction of gravity, said outlet being open in a substantially horizontal direction.

34. (Previously Presented) The developer container as claimed in claim 33, wherein

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a nozzle mounted on the body is inserted into or removed from said developer outlet in a substantially horizontal direction when said developer container is mounted to or dismounted from the body, respectively.

35. (Previously Presented) The developer container as claimed in claim 24, wherein said means for storing toner contains toner.

36. (Currently Amended) The developer container as claimed in claim 24, wherein said mouth portion is configured to receive a nozzle through said outlet in said side wall of said mouth portion whereby the nozzle does not extend into said means for storing toner.

37. (Previously Presented) An image forming apparatus comprising:
a developer container removably mounted to said image forming apparatus and storing a toner;
air feeding means for feeding air under pressure into said developer container; and
a substantially hermetically sealed passage extending from said developer container to a position to which the toner should be replenished,
wherein said developer container comprises:
means for storing toner; and
a mouth portion having a first wall connected to a toner outlet passage of said means for storing toner, said mouth portion having an outlet formed in a side wall thereof, said mouth portion having means for selectively opening and closing said outlet, said mouth portion having a second wall opposite to said first wall, wherein said second wall does not include an outlet for the toner.

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38. (Currently Amended) The image forming apparatus as claimed in claim 22 37,
wherein said means for storing toner contains toner.

39. (New) The developer container as claimed in claim 12, wherein said toner
portion contains toner.

40. (New) The developer container as claimed in claim 13, wherein said toner
portion contains toner.

41. (New) The image forming apparatus as claimed in claim 22, wherein said outlet
in said side wall of said mouth portion faces in a substantially horizontal direction when said
developer container is mounted to the image forming apparatus.

42. (New) The image forming apparatus as claimed in claim 37, wherein said outlet
in said side wall of said mouth portion faces in a substantially horizontal direction when said
developer container is mounted to the image forming apparatus.

43. (New) A developer container configured to be removably mounted to a body of
an image forming apparatus, said developer container comprising:

 a developer outlet formed in a side wall of said developer container; and
 shutter means for selectively opening and closing said developer outlet,
 wherein said shutter means opens said developer outlet when said developer container
 is mounted to said body or closes said developer outlet when said developer container is
 dismounted from said body,

 wherein said shutter means comprises:

 a biasing member;

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a shutter member constantly biased by said biasing member from an inside toward an outside of said developer container and movable between a closing position for closing a passage and an opening position for opening said passage; and

a seal member disposed in said passage and slidable on said shutter member held in the closing position, and

wherein when said developer container is mounted to said body, a nozzle penetrates into said developer container in a substantially horizontal direction while moving said shutter member from the closing position to the opening position against an action of said biasing member.

44. (New) The developer container as claimed in claim 43, wherein said developer container contains toner.